

**BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 6
ECONOMIC/WATERFRONT/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 17, 2015**

ECONOMIC/WATERFRONT/COMM. DEV. & HOUSING ATTENDANCE

PRESENT:

R. BASHNER	N. BERK-RAUCH	A. DEVENING
V. HERMANIA	A. KOZYR	A. KRASNOW
R. LUFTGLASS	D. RAMOS	A. SHEFRIN

EXCUSED:

K. DEGEER	P. LI
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ABSENT:

A. ANANTHARAMAN	E. ANDERSON	R. CERVONE
E. FELDER	V. HAGMAN	F. JEAN
D. MAZZUCA	M. RACIOPPO	S. SHIELLS
M. SILVERMAN	D. WILLIAMS	

GUESTS:

S. PHILLIPS	K. CHIN	H. FAKIR
M. CHERIAN	A. DEPASQUALE	J. THOMPSON
J. DOUGLAS	G. FIALA	

*****MINUTES*****

Presentation and discussion with the two Brooklyn CB6 Planning Fellows on the status of their respective projects, namely, (i) developing a housing opportunities study for our district, and (ii) conducting a feasibility study for the creation of a Gowanus Industrial Business District (iBID).

Planning Fellows come to us by way of a Fund for the City of New York funded program. Community Boards 6 and 2 were the first 2 Community Boards that took part in the original program when it was created years ago by then-Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer. CB6 has had Fellows for a few years but this is the first time that we've had two at a time.

This year's CB6 Planning Fellows are John Douglass from Pratt Institute conducting the survey on the Gowanus Industrial Business District (iBID) and Josh Thompson from Hunter College developing a housing opportunities study for our district.

iBID Document Research:

- Gowanus Brownfield Opportunity Area study
- NYC EDC Neighborhood Report on Gowanus – economic basis
- Bridging Gowanus – Council Member Brad Lander and Pratt Institute
- Engines of opportunity – City Council report on Manufacturing
- BID creation documents from Department of Small Business Services

Industrial sector – 10%. Gowanus area has been increasing. Industry economic multiplier is high because:

1. More than retail and hotels
2. Annual wage is 2 times retail and hotels
3. Resource for economic activity

Challenges:

1. Intense real estate pressure – change of value
2. Developable land is 1-2 Floor Area Ratio, push to change
3. Rezoning have shifted to non-industrial uses

City Council report points out that

- Many uses in the zoning code do not apply to manufacturing and industry
- Flood prone, parking issues

BID – public/private partnership. Business owner is taxed to pay for more services.

iBID – one exists in Staten Island. There are very few.

Purpose: Advocate – zoning changes.

- Be an organized voice for the local business community
- Lobby for improvements to Broadband and telecommunications
- Parking, energy efficiency
- Collective efforts – bulk orders
- Scaling building/property for business owner - clearinghouse for space

Creation:

1. Must be approved by the City Council
2. Businesses assessed
3. Will try to look more comprehensively from the BOA snapshot
4. Background info – steering committee
5. Outreach business information survey – physical/ownership
6. Try to figure out what concerns are

Can a BID and an iBID coexist?

- Properties can only belong to one BID.
- 50% of property owners must be on board to create any BID
- SBS wants to see much more than 50% support.

Are businesses within the iBID encouraged to be part also - but property owners have to commit?

What about when there is a conflict between property owner and businesses that exist?

Owner may want to sell versus businesses.

Survey: What is the goal? Who can join? How is it decided?

BIDs are based on contiguous locations.

Feasibility study – not a survey. Gowanus has many more cluster of owners. Owners in industrial area are fewer – larger lots. Big property owners may not have the same desires as the small businesses that work there.

iBID working with South Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC). If iBID is enacted, what happens if new property owners don't want it? That is so very far ahead, it's beyond the scope of the project.

What policy tools are there now to protect – only the IBZ that hasn't gotten the support of this Administration – just their manufacturing report.

Opportunities for “As-of-Right” housing

Housing – there is a lot of opportunity. 86% of CB6 is residential. Zoning ranges from R5 to R8X. The majority of lots are R6B – contextual. Study is looking at where there is available FAR.

77.47% of all residential lots are underutilized – not built to max. Not all can really be built on. But, not 60% have capacity. 23,000 more units – landmarks and other restrictions have not yet been taken into account, but they will.

Now will drill down further into details:

- Clusters of high potential need
- Review by Neighborhoods
- Alternative development
 - o Retail combination?
 - o Community Facilities?

What about open space? Gardens, parks.

Everything – looking at everything - more meaningful to get a realistic number.

- What should not be in the analysis?
- Start with vacant lots – easy to quantify.
- If there is more that can be built
- Look at ownership - Public ownership – city agencies

Filters:

- Open land
- Ownership
- Realistic or not feasible value judgments?
- Do more cuts of amount of built vs unbuilt FAR – what is a reasonable cut?
- Vacant lot – community gardens
- At level of detail
- Have not factored in parking
- What reduction of units?

- Look at connecting up lots so that air rights could be clustered onto one lot.
- Goal – actual idea on where the Administration could look to include new housing.

Amazing study – how can it be extended?

How does the data get used?

Mention that it is important to the community. Information has to be carefully presented so it is not misused. Threshold for new building into support infrastructure – impacts. Identify strategic sites – where are the most opportunistic sites.

Goal – might be to get the strategic area that could actually build.

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned.